

Meeting: Council

Date: 19 October 2017

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Proposal to Vary Parking Charges

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

Executive Lead Contact Details: Councillor Excell, Executive Lead for Community Services, robert.excell@torbay.gov.uk

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Kevin Mowat, Executive Head of Business Services, 01803 208428, kevin.mowat@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 On 29 September 2017, the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Head of Business Services and the Chief Executive, took a decision to vary the off street parking charges from 1 November and to vary the on street parking charges from 2 November to move from seasonal parking charges to fixed year-round tariffs across all parking places managed by the Council across Torbay.
- 1.2 The Mayor has requested the Council to reconsider this and is recommending that the scheduled winter tariff should remain in place for 2017/2018 in accordance with the approved budget.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 The setting of fees and charges is a Council decision and therefore, following the request of the Mayor, the matter has been referred to Council to make the final decision.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

Mayoral Recommendations:

- 3.1 That the decision taken by the Chief Finance Officer to vary the off street parking charges from 1 November and to vary the on street parking charges from 2 November, set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the submitted report be rescinded and the original parking charges (set out in Appendices 3 and 4 to the submitted report) be implemented.
- 3.2 That the Executive Head of Business Services be requested to publish the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to Revoke the 'Borough of Torbay (Street Parking

Places {Pay & Display} Order No2 2017' and 'Borough of Torbay (Off Street Parking Places) Order No3 2017' and implement the TROs set out in 3.1 above.

Officer Recommendation:

- 3.3 That the decisions taken by the Chief Finance Officer on 29 September 2017 to vary the off street parking charges from 1 November and to vary the on street parking charges from 2 November, set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the submitted report, be approved by Council and implemented as advertised.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Record of Decision – Proposal to vary the off street parking charges as of 1 November 2017

Appendix 2: Record of Decision – Proposal to vary the on street parking charges as of 2 November 2017

Appendix 3 Order 1 – off street parking

Appendix 4 Order 2 – on street parking

Background Documents

Parking Strategy 2016 ~ 2021

'Pay and Display' income figures for previous two years, and the current summer and winter tariffs.

Section 1: Background Information

1. What is the proposal / issue?

To vary the on street and off street parking charges from November 2017 to remove seasonal variations, making the parking charges easier to understand and to meet the predicted shortfall in parking income for 2017/18. This forecast shortfall was identified just prior to the end of Quarter 2 (week 25) and may be due, in part, to the relatively poor summer weather. However, the shortfall represents a real risk that the requirements of the Mayor's budget for 2017/18 may not be met, especially as the period of reduced winter tariffs would normally commence in November. Furthermore, the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore the Council's base budget, assumes a 3% year on year growth in income associated with fees and charges, across the authority.

The officers have proposed a variation to the parking charges that would see the removal of seasonal tariffs for on street and off street parking. This change would see the tariffs remain consistent across all Council operated car parks and on street pay and display spaces, throughout the year, with no seasonal summer or winter tariffs being implemented. Nine of the tariffs would reduce from the existing summer rates, two are new tariff bands and seven remain unchanged from the current summer charges. The officer proposal also includes the re-introduction of the evening tariff commencing at 6.00 p.m. which has been requested by a number of stakeholder groups. Full details of the proposed new charges can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

2. What is the current situation?

The Council approved Summer and Winter parking tariffs for 2017/2018 as part of the budget setting process for 2017/2018.

The Council's Parking Strategy 2016-2021 provides for parking charges to be kept under review and simplified.

Having examined the parking income generated over the past two years and looking at income received to date the Executive Head of Business Services advised that the anticipated income generation for 2017/2018 was likely to fall short of anticipated levels without action being taken to vary parking charges.

His professional view was that the current seasonal parking charges are confusing to the public as there is a perceived increase when the charges revert back to the summer tariffs and setting a fixed year round tariff would be easier to understand, more efficient as it would reduce the need to re-programme all the parking machines at least twice a year, and would help to meet the income targets set for parking services. The negative impact of reverting to the summer tariff would cease. The criticism this year reached the national press and portrayed Torbay in a very negative light. Also, it is

	<p>clear from benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities that seasonal charging is not common practice.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>What options have been considered?</p> <p>Option 1 (Officer Recommendation):</p> <p>To vary the charges in accordance with the decisions taken by the Chief Finance Officer to remove seasonal tariffs for on street and off street parking. This option would see the tariff remain consistent across all Council operated car parks and on street pay and display spaces with no seasonal summer or winter tariffs being implemented. This recommendation also re-introduces the evening tariff commencing at 6.00 p.m. which has been requested by a number of stakeholder groups. In contrast the retention of original Traffic Regulation Orders, as recommended in Option 2, will keep the evening tariff commencement time at 10.00 p. m., which has proved to be quite unpopular since it was introduced.</p> <p>On Street Parking:</p> <p>By introducing parking charges that apply all year round the Council will avoid the significant resource impact of having to upload new tariffs to all of the pay machines twice a year, along with the associated signage and public notices. Currently when charges change from the reduced winter tariff to the summer tariff it causes reputational damage to the Council because each Spring the public perceive this as an increase in charges rather than a simple reversion to the summer tariff. The proposed charges should therefore provide greater clarity to our customers as the charges will remain consistent throughout the year.</p> <p>Off Street Parking:</p> <p>The Council has adopted a lower rate winter tariff for off street parking since November 2013, these proposals would see the parking charges remain consistent throughout both the summer and winter seasons in all of the Torbay Council operated car parks. Neighbouring authorities no longer impose seasonal charges. The proposed changes are in line with the Council's approved Parking Strategy. (Objective 3 - Keep parking charges under review)</p> <p>The Council also now has a reduced rate annual car park permit in place that equates to being able to park in the car parks for £1 a day for regular users. There have been high sales for this type of permit as well as the £50 off-peak permit that is valid in the car parks between 3pm and 10am each day. Both of these options provide regular car park users with very affordable, and value for money options, to park in Torbay.</p> <p>By introducing parking charges that apply all year round the Council would also reduce its costs on backboard overlays as well as staff costs on having to upload new tariffs to all of the pay machines, these changes from the reduced winter tariff to the summer tariff also create a reputational damage to the Council each Spring due to the perceived increase in charges by the public. The proposed charges should also provide greater clarity to our customers with a consistent year round tariff.</p>

	<p>To alleviate concerns raised by the Mayor's Executive Group reduced rates are included for 30 minutes and 1 hour periods. Overnight charges are also reintroduced from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. at locations where charges apply 24 hours a day.</p> <p>If Council accepts this option the new charges will be implemented from 1 and 2 November in accordance with the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) advertised in the Herald Express on 4 October 2017.</p> <p>Option 2 (Mayor's Recommendation)</p> <p>To rescind the decisions taken by the Chief Finance Officer to vary the on street and off street parking charges and implement the original Traffic Regulation Orders (as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 to the submitted report).</p> <p>This option is not supported by officers as there is a risk that the annual income may well fall significantly short of the target set in the 2017/2018 budget and consequently place further pressure on the Council's revenue budget.</p> <p>It will also cause the usual upset and confusion to the public when the charges revert back to the summer rate in March 2018.</p> <p>If Council accepts this option there will be further costs to the Council as we will have to advertise further public notices to revoke the Traffic Regulation Orders advertised on 4 October, which would mean any changes made to parking charges after 20 October would not be able to come into effect from 1 and 2 November 2017. This will also cost around £600 to implement. This option does not provide the availability of the night time charge commencing at 6.00 p.m. in all car parks merely in the three short stay car parks.</p> <p>Work has commenced on the Option 1 tariff change and an alteration to Option 2 may result in the tariff work not being completed in time and the loss of income to the Council for the days before the implementation can occur as the legal order ceases and the current charges are no longer valid. This will also incur reputational damage to the Council and a loss of income.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan?</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reducing resources to best effect <p>Targeted actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Torbay remains an attractive and safe place to live and visit
<p>5.</p>	<p>How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</p> <p>This proposal has no direct link to the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents.</p>

6.	<p>How does this proposal tackle deprivation?</p> <p>This proposal provides a consistent approach across all Council car parks and on street parking.</p>
7.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>The following were consulted on the proposal to vary on street and off street parking charges from November to remove seasonal parking tariffs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Mowat, Executive Head of Business Services • Councillor Robert Excell, Executive Lead for Community Services • Mayor’s Executive Group • Martin Phillips, Chief Accountant • Chief Executive Officer
8.	<p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Through meetings and circulation of papers.</p>

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9.	<p>What are the financial and legal implications?</p> <p>Evidence suggests that the Council is due to have a shortfall in its projected parking income for 2017/2018 which will put additional pressure on the Council's revenue budget.</p> <p>In order to implement changes to parking charges the Council is required to draft a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and lodge public notices with the Herald Express advising of the details and the date the new changes will come into operation. There is no appeal process for this.</p> <p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore the base budget, assumes a 3% year on year growth in income associated with fees and charges.</p>
10.	<p>What are the risks?</p> <p>If the Council does not support the Officer Recommendation and leaves the winter tariff unchanged, Members will be accepting the risk that the annual income may well fall significantly short of the target and consequently place further pressure on the Council's revenue budget.</p> <p>There is also a reputational risk to the Council if we do not implement the new charges advertised on 4 October 2017.</p>
11.	<p>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
12.	<p>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</p> <p>The parking income figures for the previous two years indicate that the Council is due to fall short of its income target for 2017/2018 unless action is taken to review the charges.</p>
13.	<p>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</p> <p>The Mayor and Executive Lead for Community Services were concerned that not applying seasonal charges would reduce the number of visitors particularly to the town centres during the winter and would therefore impact on our economy and also not make the additional income expected over the winter. They recommended that the winter charges be kept for 2017/2018 and that consideration be given to night time charges being applied from 6.00 p.m.</p>

	<p>Due to the way the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) are processed it would not be possible to keep the winter charges and at the same time make changes to the existing TRO. That is why this has not been put forward as a viable option.</p>
14.	<p>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</p> <p>Following discussion at the Mayor's Executive Group meeting, reduced tariffs have been proposed for 30 minutes and 1 hour parking periods and the earlier commencement time for overnight parking charges have been included in the revised Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).</p>

Equality Impacts

15	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			there is no differential impact
	People with caring Responsibilities			there is no differential impact
	People with a disability			there is no differential impact
	Women or men			there is no differential impact
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			there is no differential impact
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			there is no differential impact
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			there is no differential impact
	People who are transgendered			there is no differential impact
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			there is no differential impact
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			there is no differential impact

	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			there is no differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			there is no differential impact
16	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None		
17	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	None		